

1-2018

The Pacific Sentinel, January 2018

Portland State University. Student Publications Board

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the Pacific Sentinel



IN THIS ISSUE

4

WHAT'S HAPPENING
Opening in November
Thoughts & Talks
Concerts & Events

7

LETTER TO THE EDITOR
In Response to "Aramark Falls with
Autumn Leaves"

8

**CHARTWELLS CHARGES ONWARD
WITH CAMPUS DINING**
The Compass Group USA Subsidiary
has Big Renovation Plans and Addresses
Employee Complaints
by Jessica Pollard

10

TIME'S PERSON OF THE YEAR
The Story of the Silence Breakers
by Savannah Quarum

12

**THE FREEDOM OF THE "EXPLORE
FEED"**
Facebook's Recent Experiment could Spell
Media Oppression for some Countries
by Jessica Pollard

13

PROPAGATING HATE
The Embedded Network of White
Supremacist Propaganda
by Camille Martins

15

**THE REBELLION AGAINST SCI-FI
PRECEDENT**
The Last Jedi: In a Galaxy Far, Far Away,
even Minor Characters have Value.
by Emma Ritter

16

MOVIE PASS
The Future of Hollywood or an
Unsustainable Business?
by Shane Johnson

17

**ON PECANS, AOL, AND 'FACEBOOK
JAIL'**
An interview with the founder of one of
Facebook's trendiest political satire groups.
by Andreas Bassett

20

DON'T BELIEVE A CROCODILE'S HYPE
Why Zimbabwe's New President Won't Do
The Rain
by Jason Mekkam

22

**A FOOLPROOF GUIDE TO NEW YEAR'S
RESOLUTIONS**
Grain of Salt
by Shane Johnson

24

THE DISASTER ARTIST
The Friendship That Spurred the Best-
Worst Movie Ever Made
by Alexandra Louis

25

THE PRINCESS WITHOUT A VOICE
"The Shape of Water" proves Guillermo
del Toro's Prowess
by Alexandra Louis

26

NINTENDO IS STUCK IN THE PAST
Their Love for Nostalgia will be Their
Downfall
by Aurora Mak

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FEATURED THIS MONTH

Alexandra Louis is a psychology student in her final year and is mostly just using this job as an excuse to see all the academy award contenders.

Jessica Pollard is a geography major at PSU. She wishes someone had bought her a *New Yorker* subscription for Christmas because she keeps wasting free articles on the Borowitz Report, which is actual fake news.

Josie Allison is an international studies major who has been known to yell about donuts and Christmas music.

Andreas Bassett is a senior majoring in English. He is currently working on proving his theory that the Voynich manuscript was written in code for phonetic Latin.

Jason Mekkam studies English. He hates waffles but loves pancakes.

Kasey Colton is a double major in Philosophy and Arts & Letters. Her aesthetic is a Wes Anderson remake of "Inglorious Basterds."

Aurora Mak is a lovely freshman at PSU and is studying Mathematics and Theater Arts. She enjoys being alone and Socratic seminars.

McKenzie Lee is done with life.

Savannah Quorum is in her second year of the PSU graphic design program. She just celebrated her one year anniversary of writing for the *Sentinel*. She also designed this issue's cover.

Shane Johnson is a business major and writing minor at PSU. He is a frustrated idealist, aspiring humorist, and pizza enthusiast.

Camille Martins is a junior at PSU pursuing a degree in Economics. They are a transfer student from the US south who covers economics, media, and politics.

Emma Ritter is a psychology major with a minor in Women's Studies. To the general public she appears to be an angry hippie liberal with some punk influences.

WHO WE ARE

The Pacific Sentinel magazine offers an inclusive forum incorporating depth content from the PSU community. We advocate on behalf of marginalized, explore the merits of cultural artifacts, and initiate interdisciplinary communication.

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The Pacific Sentinel is published monthly as an independent student news magazine governed by the PSU Student Media Board. Views and editorial content expressed herein are those of the staff, contributors, and readers and do not necessarily represent those of the PSU student body, faculty, staff, or administration.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

CONCERTS & EVENTS

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"Help the Hoople" Benefit Concert and Online Auction

January 5 & 6 @ 8 p.m.

Scott McCaughey, a Portland musician who produced and played with bands like R.E.M., Wilco, and The Baseball Projects, suffered a major stroke in November and is now in recovery. "Help the Hoople" is a two-night benefit concert featuring a lineup of musicians and friends of Scott's. All of the proceeds will go directly to Scott's medical and rehabilitation expenses.

The first night of the event will be held at the Star Theater on Jan. 5 and will feature the following musicians:

Alejandro Escovedo
Corin Tucker, Mike Mills, Peter Buck
Janet Weiss
Count Kellam
Fernando
James Mercer (The Shins)
Jerry Joseph
Justin Townes Earle
M. Ward
Mike Coykendall
Patterson Hood (Drive-by Truckers),
Chris Funk (The Decemberists)

The second night will be held at the Wonder Ballroom, January 6th and will feature:

Casey Neil
Dharma Bums
James Mercer (The Shins)
Corin Tucker, Peter Buck, Kurt Bloch,
Mike Mills and Janet Weiss
The Decemberists

The event is 21 and over.

Destroyer

January 10 @ 9 p.m.

Wonder Ballroom

Alt-rock group, Destroyer, will play with opener, Mega Bog, at the Wonder Ballroom on Jan. 10. The doors open at 8 p.m. with the show starting at 9 p.m. The concert is a 21 and over event.

Girl Fest

January 10 @ 7 p.m.

Holocene

Founded in 2013, Girl Fest is an annual concert celebrating the talents and power of women in music. This year's line up will include Gifted Gab, a hip hop artist from Seattle; Wynne, a hip hop artist from Portland, Oregon; Fritzwa, an R&B artist from New York; Parisalexa, a Pop/R&B artist from Seattle; Sheers, a trip-hop duo from Portland; and Dreckig, a kraut-rock/cumbia duo from Portland. The event is open to all genders and all ages. The show will start at 7 p.m.

School of Rock Portland performs Elliott Smith's "XO"

January 12 @ 7 p.m.

Holocene

Portland's School of Rock will perform Elliott Smith's first major release album, "XO" on Jan. 12 at Holocene. The doors open at 5 p.m. and the event starts at 7 p.m. The show is open to all ages.

Maria Bamford Live

January 13 @ 7 p.m.

Revolution Hall

Stand-up comedian Maria Bamford will perform live at Revolution Hall on Jan. 13. The doors open at 6 p.m. and the show starts at 7 p.m. This is an all ages event.

Steve Gunn & Julie Byrne

January 13 & 14 @ 8 p.m.

Mississippi Studios

Alt-rock artists Steve Gunn and Julie Byrne are bringing their tour to Portland's Mississippi Studios for two nights on Jan. 13 and 14. The show is a 21 and over event. Doors open at 7 p.m. and music starts at 8 p.m.

Lewis Black's The Joke's On Us Comedy Tour

January 19 @ 8 p.m.

Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall

Stand up comedian Lewis Black will bring his blunt comedy to the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall on Jan. 19. The show is all ages. The doors open at 7 p.m. and the event starts at 8 p.m.

Tyler, the Creator & Vince Staples

January 27 @ 6:30 p.m.

Veterans Memorial Coliseum

Rappers Tyler, the Creator and Vince Staples are coming to the Veterans Memorial Coliseum on Jan. 27. The show is an all ages event. The doors open at 6 p.m. and the show starts at 6:30 p.m.

IN OTHER NEWS...

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Limo driver Mike Hughes, a big proponent of the Flat Earth Theory, planned to launch a homemade scrap metal rocket 1,864 feet into the air in order to prove that earth is a flat disc. Hughes states, "I don't believe in science," and his planned trip into the earth's atmosphere was to debunk the spherical earth once and for all. Unfortunately, his efforts were for naught, as the Bureau of Land Management told Hughes that he would not be allowed to launch his rocket on public land. Shortly after being notified of this, his rocket broke down in his driveway. We sincerely wish Mike all the best!

Retired U.S. Army Sgt. Henry Walker was awarded \$7.5 million for falling and shattering his hip while shopping for a watermelon at an undisclosed Walmart location in Alabama. Walker sued Walmart for negligence and wantonness, and he argued that the store in which he sustained his injury did not keep its premises safe.

An 81 year old senior citizen in Bretton, Germany reported to the local authorities that he had found an unexploded WWII bomb in his home garden. After careful examination, the reported bomb turned out to actually be a 16 inch zucchini.

Do you remember the iconic YouTube video “Charlie Bit My Finger”? Howard Davies-Carr, father of Charlie from “Charlie Bit My Finger,” was surprised to discover that the famous YouTube clip of his sons was one of many videos that U.S. Navy Seals discovered on Osama Bin Laden’s hard drive when he was killed in 2011. When contacted by phone, Davies-Carr commented, “I don’t know how to react . . . it’s hard to take in.”

Tiangong-1, an 18,740 pound abandoned Chinese space station, is expected to fall out of orbit and crash down to earth in early 2018. The space station’s name means “Heavenly Peace” and was used a total of six times by China’s space research program before losing communication and going rogue.

THOUGHTS & TALKS

Portland State Board of Trustees meeting

January 11 @ 8:30 a.m.

Academic Student and Recreation Center Room 515

The Board of Trustees at Portland State makes major decisions at the university regarding tuition costs, campus police, administrator wages, and more. All board meetings are open to the public, usually have cookies, and provide time for public comment. Kick off the new year by

learning more about the direction PSU is headed, and maybe speaking your mind on an issue you feel is important to the student body.

The Poe Show 2018

Sunday, January 14, 8:00-11:00 p.m.

The Clinton Street Theater

When Edgar Allen Poe went to college, he drowned in so much student debt he had to burn his furniture to stay warm during the winter of his first year at school. Relatable. Come celebrate the life of a premier U.S. early scientific theorist, literary critic, and perhaps the spookiest writer of all time at the Clinton Street Theater with improv, music, and spoken word performances.

Reclaim MLK Freedom and Unity March

January 15 @ 1:00 p.m.

Peninsula Park & Community Center

Hosted by Black Lives Matter Oregon, Don’t Shoot Portland, Artists for Black Lives, and several other local organizations, the Reclaim MLK Freedom and Unity March will be the fourth children’s march of its kind in Portland, Oregon. Kids organized the march, which will pay respect to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Racing to Change: Oregon’s Civil Rights Years

January 15 through June 24

Oregon Historical Society

Beginning on MLK Day this year, the Oregon Historical Society is diving into the archives to examine the state’s 20th century relationship with the civil rights movement. The exhibit aims to show viewers the racist policies, attitudes, and destruction of black neighbourhoods in Portland, and black communities’ subsequent efforts to surpass these obstacles in the 1960s and ‘70s. Free for residents of Multnomah County (with proof of residency), and \$9 for students (with ID).

Building Grassroots Labor Solidarity

January 20, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Portland Association of Teachers

Corporate employees, don’t tell your bosses! Come eat brunch and discuss the history of labor unions in the U.S, and learn what sort of work unions across the

Pacific Northwest are doing to prevent wage cuts, job outsourcing, and more. This event will also be a kick-off to organizing the National Labor Notes Conference later this year in Chicago.

Anti-Racist Teach-In with Shawna Lipton

January 23, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Pacific Northwest College of the Arts

A free workshop part of a series focused on raising awareness about white supremacy. An emphasis on coalition building, allyship, and anti-racism. The workshop will be lead by the Chair of Critical Studies at PNCA, Shawna Lipton, with help from educators, activists and community organizers. This event is open to the public.

OPENING IN NOVEMBER

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Just Charlie

January 9

Originally released in the UK last year, "Just Charlie" follows the story of a successful young soccer player on the men's team struggling between embracing her female identity and pleasing her family while feeling trapped in the body of a teenage boy. Starring Harry Gilby as Charlie, Scott Williams, and Karen Bryson, "Just Charlie" is directed by Rebekah Fortune and debuts in the U.S. Jan. 9.

The Post

January 12

Before the presidency was occupied by "very stable genius" Donald Trump, the Watergate scandal stood as perhaps the largest political shake-up in U.S. government history, spanning across four presidencies. This film stars Meryl Streep and Tom Hanks as two editors of The Washington Post working together to try and keep up with The New York Times' unveiling of the massive 1970s government scandal. Wonder in awe of Streep's timeless cheekbones. "The Post" comes out Jan. 12 and is rated PG-13. It is directed by Steven Spielberg.

Proud Mary

January 12

"Proud Mary" is a thriller following the life of Mary (Taraji P. Henson), a hitwoman working in Boston whose life changes when a hit leaves a young boy orphaned. Directed by Babak Najafi, the film stars Taraji P. Henson, Billy Brown, and Danny Glover. "Proud Mary" is rated R and comes out Jan. 12.

Saturday Church

January 12

Fourteen year old Ulysses is living in New York and struggling with his gender identity. The discovery of "Saturday Church," an LGBTQ program for youth in the city provides a comfortable space for him to explore, but keeping his new

expressive life separate from the reality of handling new responsibilities soon proves difficult, and Ulysses finds himself homeless. "Saturday Church" is directed by Damon Cardasis and stars Luka Kain as Ulysses. It comes out Jan. 12.

Paddington Bear 2

January 12

The chubby bear in the blue coat is back and just as cute as ever. This time around, Paddington wishes to buy his aunt a beautiful vintage pop-up book for her 100th birthday. When it gets stolen, Paddington takes it upon himself to unmask the thief. Directed by Paul King, "Paddington Bear 2" stars Ben Winshaw, Hugh Grant, Sally Hawkins, and several others and comes out on Jan. 12. Rated PG.

12 Strong

January 19

The day after September 11, 2001, the U.S. Army's Green Beret special-forces are deployed to Afghanistan to fight the Taliban. The retelling of the true story, originally told in Doug Stanton's novel "Horse Soldiers," is directed by Nicolai Fuglsig. Starring Chris Hemsworth and Michael Shannon, "12 Strong" is rated R and comes out Jan. 19.

Forever My Girl

January 19

Country star Liam Page (Alex Roe) is faced with a choice between stardom and marriage, and he chooses stardom, leaving behind his bride-to-be Josie (Jessica Rothe). Directed by Bethany Ashton Wolf, "Forever My Girl" comes to theaters Jan. 19 and is rated PG.

Den of Thieves

January 19

An elite unit of the Los Angeles Police Department faces off against a crew of successful bank robbers when the Los Angeles Federal Reserve is robbed. Directed by Christian Gudegast and starring Gerard

Butler, Pablo Schreiber, and Jordan Bridges, "Den of Thieves" comes out Jan. 19 and is rated R.

Maze Runner: The Death Cure

January 26

The final film in the "Maze Runner" trilogy is here, and it involves a dangerous mission through a deadly labyrinth. The completion of the maze will lend answers to how everyone in this terrifying dystopian place, the Glade, found themselves there in the first place, with no memory of who they were before the world was destroyed by solar flares and coronal mass ejections. Based off of the third installment of the "Maze Runner" trilogy series by James Dashner, "The Death Cure" is directed by Wes Ball. Starring Dylan O'Brien and Kaya Scodelario, "The Death Cure" comes out on Jan. 26.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear *The Pacific Sentinel*,

I read the new article about PSU Eats and had some issues with it, not with the writing or anything, but what your publication was told by Jason Boss. I work at PSU Eats (and would also prefer that they don't know that I sent you this) and it seems like most of what he told your publication was not true.

For one thing, in my personal experience as well as through talking to most of the staff (food service workers and cashiers, not managers) is that we were not told and had no idea about holiday closures, and due to that, unpaid time off. In the interview he told your publication that the staff has the option to work at the MODA center, and that is basically a lie. That has not been offered to any of us, and today a coworker who used to work at the MODA center told me that they are pretty much closed at the same time so there would be no work even if it was offered.

Another thing that was untrue was when Jason Boss said that many old employees from Aramark came back because they heard or saw that PSU Eats was a great place to work. There has actually been an extreme staffing shortage that continues to get worse as more and more people quit, and the company has been dependent on a temp agency this whole time.

I don't want to go on and on, but there were other things that he told your publication that were not true. For one thing about food waste, there is a lot of food that doesn't get used. It sounded like he wanted people to think that it was getting donated to the student food bank, but since much of it is prepared food, it actually gets dumped in buckets, literally mixed up, and given to people who feed it to the homeless, completely disregarding the concept that if you are mixing 15+ kinds of prepared foods together in one container, no one probably wants to or should eat that. In addition to this, employees are not allowed to take anything home to eat themselves when vast amounts of food are either donated in this manner or thrown away.

Pretty much no one that I have talked to working for PSUeats knew that there would be a winter break until your publication released your article. I myself asked when I first heard about the break, from a friend who was quitting because of it, and my boss (one of so many) Jeff Ralston told me not to worry because it would only be one week. After your publication released the piece on PSUeats, a coworker asked about the break and we all learned that it would be one month unpaid. As to work at the MODA Center, as far as I can tell that was a complete and absolute lie Jason Boss told you. We have had no work offered to us and at this point most people I talk to at PSUeats are looking for work and not planning on coming back, with the exception of a couple of students who are planning to do temporary work at the Amazon warehouse. To be fair there are many international students who also work at PSUeats who don't mind the break and are not dependent on their wages.

In addition to that there are a lot of other issues, but the one I consider the most important are that the chefs at PSUeats have for months been ignoring the fact that much of our cold food is too warm to safely serve. We are instructed to take the temperatures of the food we serve throughout the day, and since PSUeats has opened this fall, the temperatures of the cold food has been higher than the 40 degrees that is allowed for food safety. Specifically at the salad station, the cold buffalo chicken and the cold shrimp are regularly served at a temperature of 45 to 59 degrees at the chefs insistence. I have brought this up to my managers many times, since it is a legitimate safety issue, and they have pretty much told me to keep my mouth shut and that they can't do anything about it.

Today (Nov. 21) we had a health inspection, and one of the chefs (his name is Andrew) came into the salad station and threw away all of the records we had kept of the temperatures of the food so that the inspector couldn't see them. I took a photo of the one we took today, where they were still too high, and I will continue taking them in hopes that someone, maybe your publication, will take me seriously.

On a personal note, I just want to add that working at PSUeats has been a nightmare. I felt from the beginning of my time there I have been lied to, since I was hired during the summer and given the impression that it is a faculty position, which means you get discounted tuition (it's not). I was also not told about any of the breaks, as I mentioned, and I feel like I passed up some really good opportunities, thinking I would be getting discounted tuition. In addition to that, I was told that we would get discounted transit passes, which was a lie, as well as health care, which was also a lie since no one is ever scheduled full time. Most importantly, though, one of the people I work with who I have become close too experienced all this and more, because she is a single mom. She is more trapped in this job than I am due to economic necessity and to be real it is really fucked up that they weren't transparent with her from the start.

Note: This letter has been edited for clarity.

CHARTWELLS CHARGES *with* CAMPUS onward *DINING*

The Compass Group USA subsidiary has big renovation plans and addresses employee complaints

by Jessica Pollard

Fall term, Portland State (PSU) bid farewell to long time food service provider Aramark to make room for PSU Eats—Chartwells Higher Education Dining Services' localized dining brand— across campus. Returning students may have noticed renovations and a change in dining options at the Smith Memorial Student Union (SMSU) food court, now dubbed Smith's Kitchen, a facelift at Branford's Bean in the library, or perhaps a makeover at the resident dining hall, Victor's.

These changes are all part of the package that comes with Chartwells' ten year contract with Portland State, and there are more to come. Students can expect to see a new Versa Café in the Viking Pavilion when it opens this April, and Smith's Place—once home to a Subway in SMSU—will make its debut in mid-January.

The renovations are being funded by a \$12.6 million investment return written into Chartwells' contract with PSU. About \$10 million of the investment return, according to Michael Walsh, President of Housing and Residence Life at PSU, is made up of commissions and capital investment. Part of the capital investment involves a \$2 million loan that PSU could use to build another resident dorm with a dining hall. For every dollar that Chartwells makes on campus, PSU receives 12.5 percent of it.

"The money is used to upgrade equipment and locations and keep things running. It's money, but it doesn't go to reduce costs of food or tuition," Walsh said. This year, 909 students have meal plans at PSU, which is up from 871 last school year. This increase is caused by a rise in First

Year Experience students at PSU, who are required to have a meal plan because they live on campus.

This year, Housing and Residence Life costs increased for students by 5 percent, which is up from the 2 to 3 percent usual increase of costs. "We may have to do it again this year," Walsh said.

The investment that Chartwells—a subsidiary of British multinational company Compass Group—offered during the selection process last year is smaller than what Aramark was able to offer when the company tried for contract renewal, but that doesn't seem to worry Walsh, who said that Chartwells was selected to take over the contract because it scored higher in areas like diversity, food offerings, and pricing. "I've been getting lots of great feedback [on Victor's] from staff and students... students are for the most part just blown away by how good it is," Walsh said.

"I don't have as much experience in the food court in SMSU," Walsh said, "Not hearing anything, I'm pretty happy. Sales seem to be up, which is good."

Last term, however, a worker for the Chartwells company came forward with multiple complaints regarding the treatment of employees and the safety of food handling with PSU Eats. According to the employee, some cold meat products are being served at a temperature above the Oregon Health Department's mandatory 41-degree Fahrenheit requirement for cold foods.

"We use the standard industry 'time and temperature' practices that minimizes any risk for foodborne illness. Above and beyond our standard Oregon sanitation inspections, we have a third party company we use that does independent inspections of our facility," stated Jason Boss, Resident District Manager of Chartwells for Compass Group.

The employee also alleged that many workers at Chartwells were not made aware their hours would be drastically cut over winter break this school year. Last term, Boss told *The Pacific Sentinel* that employees would have the opportunity to work at the Moda Center, also catered by Compass Group, to make up for lost hours. "We have had numerous employees work at both Intel and the Moda Center

over the last couple of months and during the Thanksgiving and Winter breaks. We have a great relationship with both accounts and are proud to offer this benefit to our associates," Boss stated in response to the claim. Employees have the ability to put their name on a sign-up sheet for this opportunity, according to Boss.

"If a person is promised something and doesn't get it, that's frustrating and disappointing. I don't think it's necessarily the end of the world," Walsh said. This employment opportunity is not listed in the contract, but according to the employee, they were not the only one unaware of the impending month-long break. "Compass Group is gigantic worldwide. Someone is going to say something about them."

Compass Group, Chartwells' parent company, has made splashes in the news in the past for several allegations regarding labor, food prices, and food safety. In 2012, Compass Group USA was sued for \$18 million with the State of New York for overcharging on school meals.

In 2015, Compass Group USA made national headlines when its employees at the U.S. Senate Kitchen in Washington, D.C. joined a walkout in protest of employee underpayment. Compass Group USA did not comment on the demands or complaints of their workers, but did say their offered wages were within compliance of their contract.

"If an employee has complaints, they can come see me if they wanted to. I could probably help, certainly, I could listen. I have influence," Walsh said in response to the information provided by the PSU Eats employee.

TIME'S

the

YEAR

The Story of the Silence Breakers

by Savannah Quarum

Time's "Person of the Year" is meant to highlight the profile of a person or group that has had the greatest impact, for better or for worse, on the world that year. For 2017, the chosen profile is The Silence Breakers. The cover of the magazine features Isabel Pascual, Adama Iwu, Ashley Judd, Susan Fowler, and Taylor Swift along with a faceless body that gets cut off, which represents the over 4.7 million people who rallied against sexual misconduct with the hashtag #MeToo, which was further adapted into #YoTambien, #BalanceTonPorc, #Ana_kaman and others. These five women are from vastly different backgrounds. Judd and Swift are mega-media sensations and household names, whereas Iwu and Fowler are professionals in lobbying and technology respectively, and Pascual is a strawberry picker from Mexico. The millions of people who used #MeToo are from different nations with distinctly

different occupations and classes. What binds them all together is a collective outrage that has been stewing and can no longer be ignored.

The shortlist for 2017's Person of the Year was filled with the typical political, high-powered, largely male names that Time's readership have come to expect. Donald Trump, Kim Jong Un, Jeff Bezos, Colin Kaepernick, Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, Robert Mueller, Xi Jinping. The only other women and groups besides the Silence Breakers were Patty Jenkins (director of Wonder Woman) and children of undocumented immigrants known as the Dreamers, who have been fighting for their rights for citizenship. This context highlights why the decision of selecting the participants of the #MeToo movement is so significant. The movement stemmed from challenging men in power—men whose names could fit in comfortably in Time's shortlist. It is about tearing open

the curtain and exposing these people in power for their exploitation. Time's selection affirms victims of sexual assault that money nor power nor rapport can exempt a person from moral vindication. Rather than smacking the cover with the face of a man that may be (or has been admitted to being) a perpetrator of sexual assault, despite whether or not they're now President of the U.S, Time is giving recognition to those who are brave enough to fight back and have victoriously made a difference in how we see and treat people in power.

Historically, those who stood up against assault and harassment have been threatened physically or professionally. Actress Selma Blair was threatened by her assaulter, film director James Toback, that if she ever were to expose him, he would "stab her eyes out with a Bic pen and throw her in the Hudson River." Additionally, Silence Breakers continue to face societal backlash of disapproval

Person of

and isolation. Iwu, after being groped in front of her colleagues, organized 147 women to sign an open letter to expose the misconduct in the California government. Her efforts were met with fear and caution from her peers, who reminded her of other women who tried to expose political figures and were seen as delusional, attention seeking, and vindictive. Indeed, this has been a year of watching idols fall. And it's not easy. It's much easier to make excuses for our favorite celebrities and to resent the people who choose to expose these unsavory facts. But at this point it is too personal, as the thousands of people who used #MeToo can attest. Too many people have been victims of sexual harassment that collective levels of sympathy have all but run out. *Time's* decision marks the change in how the public receives of these people. Instead of fighting them, the public is now fighting with them.

The Silence Breakers have ushered in a new conversation regarding sexual misconduct. In an era where colleges emphasize the importance of consent as part of their orientations, and where the number of women marching for civil rights outnumber the crowd at the presidential inauguration, the public is finally ready to have these honest conversations. The Silence Breakers have emerged at just the right time to spark not just a conversation, but a reckoning. This reckoning takes into consideration what is and is not acceptable behavior; and moreover, what the options are for a victim of unacceptable behavior.

The Silence Breakers are all tired

of living with the status quo. They are tired of having their rights withheld by powerful men through methods of fear and intimidation—methods that work because they have been codified in the behavioral norms of our culture. They are tired of living within a system where men feel entitled to women's bodies on the very basis that they are men and women are women. It's antiquated and illogical, and yet the model continues because the men in power benefit so enormously from it; so antiquated and illogical that the Silence Breakers are significant in even calling it out. They're showing the public, that as a society we need to do better, be more vigilant. Even though women can vote and own property and have the same professional positions as men, feminism is an ongoing fight, because the power imbalance between men and women is still pervasive. Yet with such a deeply ingrained problem, the Silence Breakers have still been able to direct the public's attention and fury onto the problem itself.

The political web of agendas, history, and money can seem so daunting that the average person feel powerless against it. Big banks get bailouts, politicians can break the law with impunity, corporations can monopolize the resources of entire countries. As long as these entities have enough money and power, justice remains evasive. Sexual harassment is a unique case as it is a problem that plagues the entire world, and yet can be addressed on an individual basis. Unlike political issues that comprise of and interplay of several different groups with different agendas and financial priorities, sexual

assault can be simmered down to the individual level— and it is there that the individual has the most power. The #MeToo movement symbolizes a much needed victory for democracy. Too many people are experiencing the same pain and are hungry for justice. With any luck, this movement has only just begun to whet their appetites.

The Freedom of the “Explore Feed”

Facebook’s Recent Experiment could Spell Media Oppression for Some Countries

by Jessica Pollard

If social media platforms were restaurants, Twitter would be Taco Bell, a quick place to grab a hasty update from the Trump administration after getting too many drinks downtown. Instagram would be like Bamboo Sushi, each post like an aesthetic roll drizzled with the sauce that is an appealing filter. And Facebook would be like Sweet Tomatoes, a little bit of something for everyone: family photos, painful Timehop reminders of the good times with the ex, and—depending on the person—almost constant breaking news rollouts from Hollywood, the White House, and from countries across the world.

It is this versatility that has made Facebook such an important place for the news media in recent years. In 2017, Pew Research Center reported that 68 percent of U.S. Facebook users get at least some news from the social media website.

A little personal research can reveal that mainstream national news networks like MSNBC and Fox make multiple posts on Facebook practically every hour, as is the case with print organizations like *The Guardian* and *Breitbart*. Even the Portland local alt-weekly *Portland Mercury* posts links to articles multiple times a day.

When Facebook administrators rolled out a new test this past October in select countries (including Cambodia, Guatemala, Sri Lanka, Bolivia, and Serbia) that separated news and business publisher’s content from content published by paid advertisers, friends, and family and places it in the new, experimental “Explore” feature, journalists across the

world began expressing their concern.

According to *The Guardian*, publishers in these countries who use Facebook to share media experienced a 60 to 80 percent drop in user engagement on their pages. Head of News Feed at Facebook, Adam Mosseri, released a statement explaining that the goal of the test is to see if people prefer to have their personal content separate from their public content—save content published by paid advertisers. He states there are currently no plans to roll the tests out further. “It’s also important to know this test in these six countries is different than the version of Explore that has rolled out to most people,” Mosseri states.

The Explore feature that people in other countries are seeing features a melange of content that is meant to be specifically interesting to the Facebook user. It is an expandable drop-down tab and includes new events, a “Games Feed,” and among other features, a “Crisis

Response” section that includes news stories and updates regarding tragic events.

But it’s a different story for places like Serbia, a country out of the scope of the Western news flow (a Google search of “Serbia in U.S. media” bears front page results regarding last year’s Olympic basketball feud between the two countries).

Serbia was ranked as 66 out of the 180 countries ranked in the 2017 Press Freedom Index compiled by *Reporters without Borders*, and described as “partly free” by the organization. On this list, Norway rests at number one, while North Korea sits at the very bottom.

Stevan Dojcinovic, the editor-in-chief for KRIK, an investigative journalism non-profit in Serbia, wrote to *The New York Times* in an editorial, criticizing Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg for toying with the country’s fragile democracy by placing unpaid published content into a different feed. “Facebook allowed us to bypass mainstream channels and bring our stories to hundreds of thousands of readers,” Dojcinovic writes, “by picking small countries with shaky democratic institutions to be experimental subjects, it is showing a cynical lack of concern for how its decisions affect the most vulnerable.” Dojcinovic expresses concern that mainstream media, which in his country fails to expose serious high-level government corruption, will be able to afford Facebook’s paid advertising fees, while smaller independent media will not.

On the Press Freedom Index, Cambodia is at 132, Guatemala at 118, Sri Lanka at 141 and Bolivia at 117. The country with the freest press featured in the test is Slovakia, which ranks at 17. This is down five places from last year, as the Prime Minister Robert Fico called some journalists in Slovakia “filthy anti-Slovak prostitutes” and has brought some lawsuits against the media in recent years.

In some ways, independent media across the world has allowed Facebook—a social media powerhouse formed in the U.S.—to play a precious part in fragile media flow by relying on it to bring readers to websites that they otherwise might not know about, for free. Mosseri’s statement, attempting to alleviate fear that the test will spread further, indicates that Facebook is well aware of the power it wields, whether the website wanted it this way or not.

[In 2017, Pew Research Center reported that 68 percent of U.S. Facebook users get at least some news from the social media](#)

photo of the aftermath of the Oklahoma City Bombing, courtesy of Wikipedia



Propagating Hate

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The Embedded Network of White Supremacist Propaganda

by Camille Martins

The past century has seen propaganda evolve significantly; from impassioned speakers and pamphlets to series of novels, tv shows, popular music, and even video games. The disturbing connection between the far right in the U.S. and the increasing growth of multimedia distribution for hate speech has lain deep roots in today's white nationalist movements.

When American Nazi Party (ANP) leader George Lincoln Rockwell was

assassinated in 1967, a new hate group would emerge out of the power vacuum left in his absence. Led by former ANP member William Luther Pierce, the National Alliance would grow to disseminate hateful propaganda across the nation for 50 years, alongside one of the most important texts in white power circles.

Written in 1978 by William Luther Pierce under the pseudonym 'Andrew Macdonald,' "The Turner Diaries" went on to become a blueprint for violent actions by white nationalists as far away as

Germany. Written as a novel, "The Turner Diaries" paints a narrative of a race war in the United States during the 1980s. 'Brave,' anti-government white nationalists take on a government which has deprived them of weapons, has promoted an anti-racist agenda, and is secretly run by Jewish conspirators. Pierce's depiction of a race war starts off with the bombing of an FBI building, leading to the extermination of non-whites in the United States, and ultimately the world. No 'race-traitor' is spared, as those seen as enablers of the 'zionist, anti-racist government' are lynched in the streets.

This successful book, sold exclusively through the National Alliance, inspired Bob Matthews to form a group in the '80s known as The Order. Named after the leadership of the white guerilla fighters of "The Turner Diaries," Matthews and his companions proceeded to conduct numerous robberies, armed attacks, and the murder of popular liberal radio host, Alan Berg. By disrupting the American economy and attacking vocal critics of white nationalism, The Order carried out a comprehensive terror campaign in the hopes of inciting a race war in the United States. After Matthews was killed in an FBI shootout and the remaining members of The Order were incarcerated for their attempts to foment white revolution in the United States, a young gulf-war vet, Timothy McVeigh, took his mantle and sought to recreate the beginning of the race war. In 1995, McVeigh decided to mirror a major plot point of "The Turner Diaries" by bombing an FBI headquarters. His bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City resulted in the deaths of 168 people, with over 600 injured in the attack.

In the early 1980s, Tom Metzger, a former member of David Duke's Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, decided to form a group known as White Aryan Resistance (WAR). Within a short period of time, Metzger's group created a newspaper, telephone hotlines, and a cable access show which, at its peak, broadcast in 62 cities in 21 different states.

Through these media formats, Metzger was able to give a disparate community a place to coordinate, organize, and expose unsuspecting youth to white power books, CD's, and noted celebrities.

Metzger's public access show "Race and Reason" provided a platform across the country for white nationalists to connect with each other and reach new audiences. Metzger would host different white nationalists and representatives of hate organizations and engage in lengthy debates about diverse topics such as national socialism, racial theory, and Christian identity politics—a Christian theology concept that claims whites are God's chosen people—while introducing the goals and strategies of their respective organizations.

The dangers of shows like "Race and Reason" demonstrate how useful these efforts were to bring together geographically separated movements. Prominent white nationalists like William Luther Pierce and Richard Butler, founder of notorious white nationalist organization Aryan Nations, were able to find a unified voice across large distances in the hopes of reaching as many people as possible.

When the National Alliance sought to expand their propaganda machine in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the creation of their record label and merchandising arm *Resistance Records* increased their access to a market of angry, vulnerable, young white men. In Julia Scheere's 2002 article "Games Elevate Hate to the Next Level," William Luther Pierce stated, "From the very beginning, we have been a multimedia organization, interested in using communication, using every medium that we can to reach the public effectively." Bands such as Rahowa (a shortening of Racial Holy War), Prussian Blue (two pre-teens who performed white power folk music), and Burzum (black metal created by convicted Norwegian murderer, Varg Vikernes) helped bring its musical arm to prominence across the United States.

In 2001, ads reading, "Celebrate Martin Luther King Day With A Virtual Race War!" appeared in white nationalist publications. "Ethnic Cleansing," a PC game created by *Resistance Records*, was released on MLK day the following year and sold for the symbolic price of \$14.88. The number 14 refers to the 14 words of the white power mantra, "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children." 88 signifies the numeric placement of the letter H in the alphabet and translates to HH, meaning Heil Hitler.

The 14 words were coined by David Lane, member of The Order and one of Alan Berg's murderers, and have transcended through all aspects of white nationalist culture. In the game, players play as first-person shooters in a "ghetto" where their goal is to shoot people of color. African-American caricatures make monkey sounds when shot; latinx characters scream "Ay Caramba!" Hidden rooms display projections of William Luther Pierce advocating for a race war and the white revolution. Once the protagonist reaches the subway, they must murder Jews, some of which are stereotypically dressed in Haredi dress, who scream "Oy Vey!" when shot. The final challenge is to kill a characterization of then-Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

While this game was not the first attempt to recruit young people to white supremacy through video games, it represented a progression in not only complexity, but also technological advancement in the pursuit of white nationalist recruitment. Games such as Aryan 3, Shoot the Blacks, NSDoom, and WPDoom had already existed on websites such as the World Church of the Creator, whose leader Matt Hale sought to propagate through every possible media. In a 2002 interview with *Wired*, Hale stated "If we can influence video games and entertainment, it will make people understand we are their friends and neighbors...As long as it doesn't denigrate white people or have pornography in it, it's OK with us."

In reflecting on what repercussions these forms of propaganda have on the public, Portland has witnessed its own deadly impacts. Notorious local skinhead group ESWP (East Side White Pride) was formed when WAR's youth leader Dave Mazella arrived in Portland in 1988. Relying on a letter from Metzger to convey authority, Mazella quickly got to work organizing in Portland. Within a month, members of ESWP and WAR under Mazella's tutelage violently murdered Mulugeta Seraw, an Ethiopian graduate student who was dropped off at a residence in front of ESWP members. When Kenneth Mieske (of ESWP) explained his motivation for the murder, he explicitly stated Seraw was murdered purely "...because of his race." Civil courts found Metzger responsible for

inciting racial hatred and violence against minorities. While Metzger didn't serve any prison time, his media empire collapsed due to financial blows after the Seraw family sued him.

From the safety of computer screens and smartphones, it can be difficult to take white nationalist media seriously. While we mock these disgusting attempts at manipulation, we leave behind the young people who find this hateful rhetoric in front of them. The 2017 PBS documentary "Oklahoma City" presents the humanity of how these media affected someone like Timothy McVeigh. He was a young man who had been bullied growing up. Afterwards he signed up for the U.S. Army, only to find himself disgusted by the savagery of U.S. military actions in the Persian Gulf War. A young man who saw his government in the same vein as the bullies who made his life hell growing up, he was forever changed by a slow exposure to radical right-wing ideologies. When we ignore the detrimental effects this hate speech and indoctrination has on society, we leave behind vulnerable people whose humanity has been stripped by media narratives that paint evil-doers as monsters. Dangerous seeds begin to germinate without vocal opposition to the ideas they instill and have lead to violence. The dismissal of these fringe notions are of no comfort to the people whose lives have been forever changed by their actions. The cost of hate speech isn't measured in "liberties", it is measured with a body count.



THE REBELLION AGAINST SCI-FI PRECEDENT

The Last Jedi: In a Galaxy Far, Far Away, even Minor Characters have Value.

by Emma Ritter

“Star Wars” is a huge influential American movie franchise, reaching audiences across the world. The new movies have been wildly successful, building on the story and characters originally created by George Lucas. “Star Wars” has always been a series about the struggle of the rebels against a much more powerful omnipotent overlord, and chronicles the story of the beloved underdogs fighting it. What is especially unique about the most recent installment, however, is how much value is placed on life.

Sci-fi movies these days are becoming more violent; countless civilians can die in no more than thirty seconds of screen time, and this tragedy isn’t really touched upon. This is particularly common with soldier characters—any movie with any kind of battle shows the death that comes with war, but never really shows who the people dying are. There is no screen time for the mother who gave birth to them, the siblings who love them, and the people who were close to their heart. The movie shows the death, but not the person they were, and the people who loved them. It doesn’t show the crushing loss the death of a minor character brings.

By contrast, “Star Wars: The Last Jedi” does a lot to show who the rebels are. It shows their faces as they die and it shows the impact each death has on those in command—General Leia in particular. It is difficult to watch strong, passionate rebels die in the hands of an evil overlord. In one particular scene, Leia slaps and demotes Poe, a headstrong fighter pilot, after he goes against her orders and

continues a mission to destroy a First Order warship, at the great cost of many ships and their pilots. The audience even sees a bomber pilot scrambling to drop bombs on the ship, dying heroically in a way you’d expect a main character to, but never an unnamed extra. Later, it shows the bomber’s sister, Rose, crying on the rebel ship after her sister’s death. She goes on to help strike a huge blow against the First Order. This film shows emotion, it shows the cost behind every attack, and it shows how much each rebel gave up with their decision to fight back against their oppressors.

This respect for the minor character is expanded on Leia’s character as well. It shows her not just as a general hellbent on beating the First Order and restoring peace to the galaxy, but also as a general who cares deeply for her troops. It even breaks the trope of the rebellious hero who goes against orders and saves the day: the audience sees this character, in this case Poe, realize and feel the loss each attack brings. It’s a badass story where you don’t have to be the son of Darth Vader to be the savior of the galaxy; sometimes you just have to want to stand up against your oppressor.

Perhaps that’s the best part of the “Star Wars” films—that power it gives the oppressed, the strength and bravery it gives to every rebel in the movement. This is a powerful theme for a such a successful franchise to have. It could even have real world implications for the victims of oppression everywhere, empowering them to fight against what’s wrong in this world.

Is Moviepass the Future of Hollywood or an Unsustainable Business?

by Shane Johnson

Subscription-based streaming services have drastically changed the television landscape in recent years, accounting for 70 percent of internet usage during peak hours. The next entertainment institution to be disrupted by the subscription model could be the big screen, thanks to Moviepass, a subscription service for theatrical movie releases that allows users to see up to one movie per day for a monthly fee of \$9.95. Paying the price of a single ticket for a month's worth of movies may seem too good to be true, but the sustainability of the business model is yet to be determined. The \$9.95 price level is new for Moviepass— an experiment that could either change the moviegoing experience permanently, or lead to the company's failure.

Moviepass was founded in 2011, and until this summer was charging roughly \$30-50 per month, a worthwhile deal for only the most consistent moviegoers. That changed shortly after Mike Lowe stepped in as CEO in June. Lowe, a former video store entrepreneur who went on to become a founding executive at Netflix and president of RedBox, analyzed user data and saw an opportunity for growth. After an initial increase in movie attendance after signing up, the average customer settles into a pattern of seeing just over one movie per month at the \$9.95 rate. So in August, Moviepass officially lowered its pricing, creating a surge of subscribers and publicity that crashed their website. The company's total subscriptions skyrocketed from 20,000 to 600,000 by October.

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of Moviepass's business model is that the company is paying theaters full price for every movie their customers attend. This means Moviepass is currently operating at a loss, sacrificing profit in order to gain market share. The company sends each user a branded debit card that is used to purchase the ticket at the theater. Customers then use their smartphone's location services to

check-in at the movie theater using the Moviepass app (to deter ticket reselling), and the exact cost of the ticket is loaded onto the Moviepass card.

Tickets can only be purchased same-day at the theater itself, meaning advance e-tickets such as those offered through Fandango or the Regal Cinemas app are not an option with Moviepass. Additionally, tickets must be purchased individually, leaving theaters that offer reserved seating more difficult to attend in groups. Moviepass currently does not support more expensive IMAX or 3D showings either, but there are no blackout dates, so users can see any standard showing of any movie any day of the year at 91 percent of theaters in America.

Whether Moviepass becomes profitable depends on a number of potential long-term income sources. The company hopes to eventually negotiate deals with major theater chains to share a portion of ticket and concession sales. The service will also accumulate a valuable supply of user data that it can sell to movie distributors and marketers.

While Moviepass is an excellent bargain for the consumer, the movie industry has a love-hate relationship with the company. Many theaters see it as devaluing movie tickets, and AMC has publicly denounced the August price-drop. 2017 was a particularly bad year for theaters, with the lowest attendance in over a decade and falling theater stocks. Moviepass has proven itself adept at bringing more people into theaters, doubling attendance and increasing concession spending by 123 percent. Lowe has referred to the service as "bad movie insurance," removing the risk from seeing a potentially disappointing movie and encouraging moviegoers to take more risks.

Only time will tell if Moviepass is sustainable, but for now, it's an unbeatable deal for any movie-lover.

ON PECANS, AOL, AND 'FACEBOOK JAIL'

An interview
with the
founder
of one of
Facebook's
trendiest
political
satire
groups.

by Andreas Bassett

Donald Trump's presidential campaign and presidency have been major sources of entertainment for the past year and a half. Though most previous US presidents have been criticized and mocked, the intractable users of the internet have taken to ridiculing Trump like never before. Well-known comedy shows and series including "Saturday Night Live," "the Late Show With Stephen Colbert," and "South Park" regularly parody the media star President. His stormy and egotistical personality has opened the floodgates as comedians, entertainers, news outlets, and online communities now have an array of opportunities to openly take the piss out of the Donald.

In the digital world, Trump's rise to power facilitated the creation of an idiosyncratic Facebook group: Christian Conservatives For Trump (CC4T). Created in November of 2016, CC4T's outward aim is simple, as the page's 'Our Story' states, "Conservative Christians for Donald J Trump. A Group For Supporters of Conservative Politics, Christian Values and our President." More compelling is the message underneath this statement from the supposed admin:

**"MY NAME IS JEFFREY AND I HAVE LIVED IN
GEORGIA AND MISSOURI AND NOW FLORIDA.
I AM A CONSERVATIVE REPUBLICAN WHO IS
FEDUP WITH WHAT WE GONE THRU FOR 8
YEARS WITH THAT TERRIST IN ARE WHITE
HOUSE AND NOW TRUMP IS GOING TO MAKE
AMERICA GREAT AGAIN AND THE ATHETITS
LIBTARDS NEED TO SHUT UP!"**

Jeffrey, who also refers to himself as "Mr. Conservative," is the architect behind the page. He is at the helm of content creation and is responsible for its many disconcerting features, including the profile and cover photo. CC4T's profile picture is a photoshopped image of Jesus Christ

holding up a pixelated photo of Trump. This photo-within-a-photo within another photo creates an artificial labyrinth—one of the first layers of CC4T's dreamscape. The cover photo is equally quirky. The same portrait of Trump is used again but this time the middle of the Confederate flag accompanied by the phrases "Support President Trump," "Conservative Politics," "Christian Social Issues," and "Christian Values." This abstraction sits in the top right-hand corner of a much larger picture of Trump at a podium holding up what appears to be a genuine "Christian Conservatives For Trump" poster.

Most posts are written in all-caps and demonstrate disregard for proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. They take the form of the grossly popular modern-day meme and are distinctly pro-life, pro-Trump, pro-Christian, anti-marijuana, anti-Obama, and Islamophobic. On the surface, CC4T looks like a safe haven for stereotypical conservative and nationalistic die-hard Trump supporters. To the contrary of my initial observations and generalizations, the case turned out to be quite the opposite.

With the page growing quickly and receiving hundreds of likes, comments, and shares everyday, Jeffrey is incredibly difficult to get a hold of. After weeks of attempting

to connect with someone at CC4T via private Facebook messaging and public posting, Jeffrey finally responded. He did not give his real name. He assured me that the page is troll-like in nature and pointed to the fact that CC4T is

technically listed under the categories "comedy club" and "just for fun" in the "about" section of the page. Despite this, the page reviews are mostly divided between one-star and five-stars; users either praise CC4T or offer caustic remarks of serious disapproval. It would appear as though the page's "love it or hate it"

effect is dependent on an individual's taste in humor, as well as the ability to perceive it. Jeffrey claims to be a proponent of satire peppered with occasional trolling, but there are subtleties and distinctions to be made between the two forms of humor.

Trolling involves the propagation of provocative material with the intent to produce an aggravated emotional response (along with a schadenfreude mindset to take delight in the ensuing havoc). Satire is different in that its appeal is not directly tied to provoking people. Satire is the deployment of humor (sarcasm, hyperbole, caricature, ridicule, etc.) to shed light on and criticize people and ideas. Audiences that engage with satiric material probably know that the content may be upsetting for some individuals; but unlike trolling, the aim of satire is not to get a rise out of people, but rather to critique the current state of politics and other topical issues. To troll is to deceive

your audience; satirization is to include your audience. Well-known examples of modern-day satire include the television series *South Park* and the pseudo-news organization *The Onion*. A blatant case of trolling was when Canadian comedians ("The Masked Avengers") called Sarah Palin in 2008 pretending to be the French President at the time, Nicolas Sarkozy. Nevertheless, CC4T blurs the lines between each farce to create an even more controversial result.

Jeffrey tends to publish his homemade memes daily. They usually feature misspelled text in large block letters, a picture or series of pictures to accompany the text, and the signature "Christian Conservatives for Trump" trademark in the bottom left-hand corner, as well as the "my-conservative.com" link to Jeffrey's website in the bottom right-hand. His memes are also accompanied by a solid paragraph of explanation. The result is one that is satirical in nature, because

Jeffrey attempts to make a mockery out of current events by presenting fake over-the-top Christian and conservative-leaning opinions. Jeffrey also trolls in the comments of his memes by egging on users that appear to believe his rhetoric. With the same tactics he uses in all of his writing, Jeffrey berates those that completely miss the joke in order to try and get more of a rise out of them. This cycle of satire and trolling is what fuels CC4T. The loyal fanbase even imitates the way Jeffrey writes by trolling newcomers in the exact same manner. CC4T's community of satire-enthusiasts and trolls both enjoy Jeffrey's memes as well as the naive ignorance of some individuals that take them seriously.

I was fortunate to be able to shoot off some questions to Jeffrey shortly before he was hit with a thirty day ban on Facebook for publishing an offensive "stop the war on Christmas" meme.



What made you start the Facebook page "Christian Conservatives For Trump"?

I found myself arguing quite often on local news station Facebook pages with conservatives. I was shocked by some of the things that they actually believed, like PizzaGate, or that Fema Death Camps existed, or that George Soros owned Snopes, just to name a few. To take out my frustrations, I figured I would have a little fun with it, so I created [the] website Mr-Conservative.com and the Facebook page, "Christian Conservatives for Trump," both of which are run by a fictitious character named Jeffrey along with his friend "Billy" who helps with the technical aspects of running the page and website. For example, Billy helped Jeffrey get back on AOL by replacing his 56k modem which was hit by lightning.

Who is "Jeffery"? What's his background?

Jeffrey was created based on a number of things: a redneck that I once saw on television who was defending his Confederate flag combined with some of the personalities of people that I had argued with in the past on Facebook. The spelling errors I make are a language in itself; much of it derived from real conversations I had online with some conservatives. My behavior online is based on the interactions I have had with them as well, for instance, when someone provides me with factual information that can be proven, I completely disregard it and tell them to do their "research."

Your page is listed under “comedy club” and “just for fun,” but you’ve been banned in the past; why is this?

Satire is a funny thing, aside from being “Ha-Ha” funny, it’s funny in that a large percentage of people simply do not understand it. Based on my current rating on Facebook, I have over 1,200 ratings with five stars and over 600 with only one star. Using that figure, it comes out to 1/3rd of the people who have accessed my page and rated it are unable to grasp the concept of satire. These people are passionate on both sides of the table; they either completely love it or outright hate it. The page is absurdly over the top (the spelling, the beliefs, etc.) and it amazes me every time that I make a post the sheer number of people who take it seriously. Things like a photo of half of a pecan accompanied by text stating how it’s an aborted baby’s lungs and that Planned Parenthood is selling baby parts. That specific post got something like 40,000 comments and more than 17,000 shares. Many believed that I was a right-winger trying to fool people by pretending they were real lungs in order to really stop abortions. Thousands of others simply argued whether or not it was a cashew or a pecan. Many people get extremely upset at my over-the-top views [resort] to name calling, swearing, and even physical threats.

What’s your message? Why do you do this and what do you hope to get out of it?

Some people just need to sit back and take a breath. They’re wound so tightly that they are unable to grasp the hilarity of a situation.

Does Facebook have a censorship problem? How do you get around this?

Yes, as I mentioned, many people take this so seriously that they constantly report me. My spam report (which also contains the number of other negative reports for things like hatred, etc.) can range from between 10 reports a day up to 600 reports a day, depending on the post that I make. I’ve shared many images/memes of someone with convincing grotesque Halloween makeup on their face and I have stated that their injury came from a “pot bong explosion.” Those images were reported hundreds of times until finally Facebook censored the image. As far as working around it, there is not much that can be done. Reports are reviewed by Facebook employees and with a third of the people not understanding satire it’s more of a luck-of-the-draw situation. If I get an employee that “gets” it, I am safe; otherwise, it’s a ban. My last ban was for 30 days. The irony of it all is that probably 60 percent of the people are liberals, with only about 40 percent being conservative. None of this is to say that all conservatives are this way; it’s just that a small sect of them have such ridiculous beliefs that it’s impossible for some people to distinguish between their beliefs and satire. I tried to make a Facebook page and website that were a polar opposite of what I had going on (atheist liberals), but the problem there was trying to come up with things that were as outlandish as what some conservatives believe.

Poe’s Law, an adage of the internet age, asserts that it is impossible to create a parody of fringe views and fundamentalism without clear signs of authorial intent. Since all online comments are purely text-based, it is truly challenging to assess the candor of an individual’s statement. Although CC4T is intended to humorously mock certain beliefs and sections of the political spectrum, Jeffrey has been inadvertently punished for going against Facebook’s Policies and Community Standards, a body of rules and guidelines cited to remove content that is deemed inappropriate by Facebook admins. The individual community standards themselves are clear cut (e.g. “We remove credible threats to public figures, as well as hate speech directed at them – just as we do for private individuals”). But when they are used to remove satirical content with no further explanation other than “We removed the post below because it doesn’t follow the Facebook Community Standards,” and no option to contact anyone at Facebook to resolve the issue, Jeffrey has to pay the price of being censored. For other pages affiliated to CC4T, such as Christians For Michele Bachmann and Christians Against Science, being placed in “Facebook Jail” is a common result of testing Facebook’s policies and guidelines by sharing material that may be difficult to interpret. Even with descriptors denoting a comedic and satiric disposition are not enough to keep pages like CC4T safe from a Facebook time-out.

The communities that gather around CC4T are responsible for the page’s steady growth in recent months. Memorable posts that use images of women doing yoga to justify resisting Islam and therefore Sharia Law (or how Jeffrey deliberately misspells it, “Shakira Law”) and disfigured faces to preach an anti-marijuana (“the pot”) agenda draw both fans of comedy and satire as well as Facebook users that take the memes hook, line, and sinker as being serious messages. These two antithetical groups tag their friends to bring reinforcements and invariably go to text-based war with each other. The resulting equilibrium is fascinating; it is a unique cathartic release during a strange time of political upheaval in the U.S.

Don't Believe a Crocodile's Hype

Why Zimbabwe's New President Won't Do the Rain

by Jason Mekkam

The most damning predictor of Zimbabwe's new president was written 50 years ago: "A man who has just come in from the rain and dried his body and put on dry clothes is more reluctant to go out again than a man who has been indoors all the time," says Odili—Chinua Achebe's protagonist in "A Man of the People." Published in January 1966, six years after his Nigeria liberated itself from Britain (and two days after Nigeria's first military coup), Achebe's novel is Nigeria-influenced, but not Nigeria-specific. Its political satire, "a rather serious indictment of post independence Africa," according to Achebe, targets a continent-at-large, amidst mass decolonization.

Africans rid themselves of European rule from Algeria to Zambia. But the economic and social structures imperialism created stayed, catalysing atrocities from blood diamonds in Sierra Leone to genocide in Rwanda. Politically, postcolonial Africa birthed a plight of strongmen heading corrupt governments, enriching themselves at their nations' expense, violently suppressing dissent. Odili's proverb speaks to the psyche of politicians in his new, unnamed African nation, and their anxiety over losing post-colonial power. As Odili puts it, "We ignore man's basic nature if we say, as critics do, that because a man...had risen out of poverty and insignificance to his present opulence, he could be persuaded without much trouble to give it up again and return to his original state."

Enter Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, the poster boy of opulent, anxiety-driven rain-dodgers. A school teacher turned political activist, Mugabe led Zimbabwe's liberation movement against Ian Smith's racist Rhodesian government, becoming Prime Minister of newborn Zimbabwe in 1980. The end of an oppressive

regime by the promise of national self-determination—a truly democratic society—fostered mass jubilation. But joy became sorrow, with the reality of Mugabe's 37-year uninterrupted tyrannical misrule. Under Mugabe, Zimbabwe suffered economic collapse, astronomic hyperinflation, massive unemployment, decreased life expectancy, and extreme deterioration of basic infrastructure. Political dissent—any threat to Mugabe's power—was repressed by incarceration and violent force. Cronyism and nepotism ran rampant. The indifference became shameless: earlier this year, as most wallowed in poverty, Mugabe's twenty-something-year-old son posted himself pouring champagne over an expensive wristwatch in a nightclub.

Zimbabweans literally danced in the streets, a jubilation returned, when word broke on November 21st that the 93-year-old Mugabe had resigned. His downfall was swift. After firing Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa (um-nan-GA-gwa) to secure his wife's succession a week prior, Mugabe was placed under house arrest by Zimbabwe's military. Refusing to resign even after his party, Zimbabwe African National Union—Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), expelled him, it wasn't until motions of impeachment were set to begin that Mugabe threw in the towel.

On November 24, Mnangagwa, returned from exile in South Africa, became Zimbabwe's second head of state. Thousands filled National Sports Stadium in Harare, the nation's capital, to witness their new leader's inauguration. Bolstered by his people's good will, Mnangagwa gave a speech of self-professed humility, hitting all the right notes, with a promise to hit the ground running. "The culture of government must change and change now," he said, to thunderous applause. Resurrecting the economy, societal

inclusivity, increasing the nation's international standing, committing to fair elections were key promises. He spoke cordially of Mugabe, honoring his role in the country's founding. Quashing lingering resentment while stoking national optimism, Mnangagwa said, "Whilst we cannot change the past, there is a lot we can do in the present and future to give our nation a different, positive direction. As we do so, we should never remain hostages of our pasts. And I must humbly appeal, to all of us, that we let bygones be bygones." Sans context, his words are fine. With context, his words terrifying.

Mnangagwa is just as horrible as Mugabe. Kimiko de Freytas-Tamura, for *The New York Times*, writes, "Officials and observers of Mnangagwa's rise to power say he shares some of Mr. Mugabe's traits: He is power-hungry, corrupt, and a master of repression." The son of a farmer, Mnangagwa was a freedom fighter by 16. Having received military training in China and Egypt, Mnangagwa's relationship with his predecessor dates back to 1970s, when he became Mugabe's bodyguard and personal assistant during the liberation movement of the Portuguese-colonized Mozambique. Mugabe valued Mnangagwa's loyalty, promoting him consistently through the ranks of his increasingly authoritative government, ultimately making him the head of the Central Intelligence Organization in the mid-1980s. In his position, ordered by Mugabe in response to political opposition, Mnangagwa quarterbacked Gukurahundi—or "the early rain that washes away the chaff before spring," a manic, bloody campaign that killed 20,000; many of which were of the ethnic minority Ndebele. For his service in viciously suppressing his people's will, Mnangagwa was promoted to the

Vice Presidency in 2014. Attempting to distance himself from his bloody career as Mugabe's right-hand-man, he actively sought to change his reputation into that as one of an economic reformer.

Mnangagwa is believed to have had a role with in Mugabe's outing, with new reports on his consistent communication with military leaders during the coup. As Max Bearak writes for *The Washington Post*, "Mnangagwa is better known by his nom de guerre, 'Garwe,' or 'The Crocodile.' In a radio interview two years ago, Mnangagwa explained that a crocodile never leaves the water to search for food. Instead, it waits patiently for its prey to approach. 'It strikes at the appropriate time,' he said." Finally in control, Mnangagwa is eating.

There's hope that Mnangagwa will live up to his promises. And that politicians don't always lie. And that crocodiles don't plot. And that a 75-year-old man, in his new dry suit, will be willing to go back out into the rain. And that Achebe's Odili doesn't know what he's talking about. Ironically, in his inaugural speech, Mnangagwa said, "Never again should circumstances that have put Zimbabwe in an unfavorable position be allowed to reoccur." Never should Mnangagwa have been allowed to take office. A month after Mugabe's resignation, Zimbabwe still remains under tight military control. Soldiers scare rural voters, despite his promise of free elections. Mnangagwa has filled his cabinet with loyalists despite a promise inclusion. Fears of old have been resurrected despite new leadership. As Jason Burke writes for *The Guardian*, "The ousting of Mugabe was a redistribution of power within the ruling elite of Zimbabwe, not a people's revolution."

Time will tell for certain if 2017's jubilation will go the way of the 1980s, but for now the forecast looks bleak.

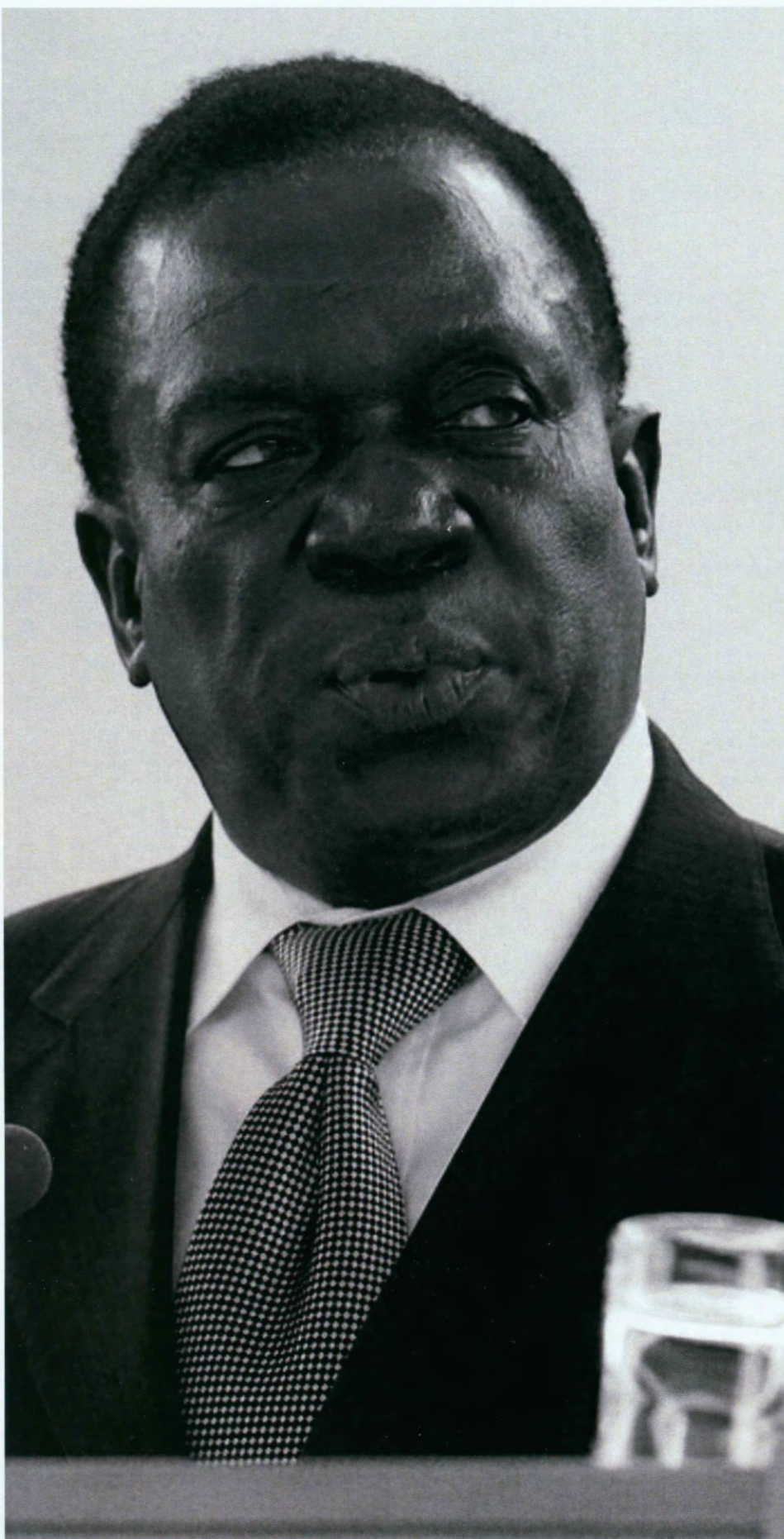


photo from Flickr - UN Geneva

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a lit sparkler. The sparkler is in the foreground, with its bright orange and yellow sparks radiating outwards against a dark blue night sky. The sparks are long and thin, creating a starburst effect. The hand is visible at the bottom of the frame, holding the stick of the sparkler.

GRAINS OF SALT

A Foolproof Guide to New Year's Resolutions

By Shane Johnson

To many, the new year is a time for looking ahead to all that comes with another year of life: new memories, new experiences, and new lies we tell ourselves. While New Year's resolutions are a popular tradition for many, a University of Scranton study suggests that as few as eight percent of people actually keep their resolutions. And yet, resolutions continue to be made and broken each year.

Which is why I, the Ghost of New Years Past and Future (yes, I am both - the Department of Holiday Apparitions has had some budget cuts), am here to warn you of your folly. The tradition of New Year's resolutions can, in fact, be traced back to my life. I was born Sir Charles F. Resolution in 1879. A compulsive liar, I attended a New Year's Eve party and spent the entire night rambling wildly about the many things I was confident I would accomplish in the new year. I died the next day, and to honor my memory, my friends and colleagues began gathering annually on New Year's Eve to fabricate unrealistic goals for the new year. Eventually, the tradition spread around the globe, with ordinary people from New York to Newark (the long way around) joining in the annual cavalcade of lies.

But while the empty promises of our New Year's resolutions are all in good fun, they come with a certain amount of risk: the possibility of actually coming true! Let us consider a few common resolutions and their consequences, so maybe you'll think twice before resolving this year.

Go to the gym: Let's imagine you do finally pay for that gym membership. You're spending a lot of money each month for a generally unpleasant experience that takes up a significant amount of time you don't have, all to conform to societal body standards that aren't fair to begin with! Save the money, and put it towards something more enjoyable—perhaps a new hobby?

Learn a new skill or hobby: Perhaps you finally pick up that guitar, learn a new language, or start collecting those model trains! Then suddenly, you're confronted with an unfortunate reality: this takes a lot of practice. It seemed simpler before you started. You didn't know this would take so much time! Or even worse, what if you have an impressive natural talent for your chosen skill? Suddenly you're tirelessly playing sold-out arenas, translating international trade agreement negotiations, or speaking to

model train conventions around the globe. But you failed to consider the price of fame: you've lost all your real friends; paparazzi, reporters, or train-heads follow you everywhere; and your passion for your craft is fading. This resolution can only end in disappointment. Save your self-esteem and/or privacy while you have it.

Make more friends: Sure, you may be lonely right now. But once you have more friends, you'll be out of the house more, paying money for overpriced drinks or events you're only sort of interested in. Friends are expensive, and they'll usually disappoint you, or at least forget about you once they have kids. Save the money, and put it toward something more practical, like a gym membership!

Stop smoking: This is one I can get behind. Quitting smoking can greatly reduce your risk of disease and early death. And it saves money! Win-win. What's that? You don't smoke? Congratulations, you just accomplished your New Year's resolution!

Start saving money: You finally start saving for retirement—cutting costs, staying at home, avoiding pricey hobbies. As the years go by, your savings account accumulates a respectable sum. It's finally time to spend it, but now you are old and full of regret. Oh, all those wasted years! You were foolishly obsessed with saving money when you should have been enjoying your youth! Saving is for suckers—live a little!

I hope you can see how dangerous the repercussions of New Year's resolutions can be. And while the sinister corporate interests of the New Year's Glasses lobby would like you to think otherwise, New Year's is not a holiday about celebrating a fresh start.

If anything, New Year's is a cold reminder of the fleeting nature of time. In the cold, final hours of Dec. 31, year after year, we gather for the same rituals of alcohol-fueled parties, midnight countdowns, and fireworks on TV, as some form of half-hearted acknowledgment that another year of life has come and gone since the last time we did this. New Year's begs a question of us that we'd rather not address: Must we spend all our years in vague regret, haunted by our inability to control the wild ride of our lives? Yes. Yes we must. As a wise man once said, "The years start coming and they don't stop coming."

The Disaster Artist

The Friendship that Spurred the Best-Worst Movie Ever Made

by Alexandra Louis

When Greg Sestero spoke at Cinema 21 on Dec. 8, he told the audience that it was a review of the very first Portland screening of “The Room” that pulled him out of the shame of having starred in it and spurred him to write “The Disaster Artist: My Life Inside ‘The Room,’ The Greatest Bad Movie Ever Made.” The memoir details Sestero’s friendship with writer, director, producer, and star Tommy Wiseau and his experience making “The Room.” It wasn’t long after the publication of these experiences that James Franco called him wishing to adapt them into film.

The result is “The Disaster Artist,” a film that is everything “The Room” is not. For starters, it’s a good movie. The plot is coherent, the performances impressive, the message clear. “The Disaster Artist” is a film about friendship, dedication, dreams, and the movie that skyrocketed possible madman Tommy Wiseau to a complex kind of cult stardom. It’s also a film about comfort zones, and the beauty of breaking down the walls that exist both within oneself and externally.

Throughout the movie, Sestero (Dave Franco) struggles with being in any sort of spotlight, while Wiseau (James Franco) is desperate to be seen. Wiseau is unapologetically himself, pushing Sestero to join him outside the influence of what others think, and Sestero finds himself enchanted by living with the sort of raw and reckless abandon that he sees in the man sitting across from him. The push and pull of this relationship—Sestero pulling away and Wiseau pushing his limits—is the dynamic that drives the film. It is charming to watch Sestero slowly break out of his self-consciousness, and while there is a certain cringe-inducing quality to it, it is endearing also to see Wiseau coax him out of that shell.

While the film was marketed as a ‘making-of’ story of how (as Sestero puts it) the greatest-bad-movie-ever-made came to be, the more direct focus is on the relationship between Sestero and Wiseau. The story picks up in the 1998 acting class where the two met and follows them as they form a friendship, move to Los Angeles together, and struggle trying to make it big before Wiseau sits down to write his muddled, excessive script. It is the drama in their personal relationship that takes up the majority of the film, with the actual making of “The Room” taking a backseat to the highs and the rough patches in their friendship. While their bond starts strong and grows fast, it begins to go downhill as Sestero moves out of the apartment he shares with Wiseau to live with his girlfriend. Wiseau becomes jealous and lashes out at Sestero while parallel tensions rise on the set of

“The Room,” complicating the friendship further. After the movie wraps, Sestero walks out of Wiseau’s life, abandoning him and refusing to see him until the premier of “The Room” many months later.

At the end of “The Disaster Artist,” as Wiseau steps up onstage to take the first of many bows for a thoroughly entertaining piece of work, it is not a celebration of the movie he made, but a celebration of coming back together with Sestero and making amends that the audience can most identify with. In a certain way, Sestero and Wiseau are painted as soul mates and kindred spirits—they may separate or fall out at times, but they will find their way back to each other regardless of what it is that drove them apart, and it is through this bond that “The Room” was even made possible to begin with, for better or for worse.



still from “The Disaster Artist” movie trailer

Released: December 8, 2017

Directed by James Franco

Written by Scott Neustadter and Michael Weber

Starring: James Franco, Dave Franco, Alison Brie, Ari Graynor, and Seth Rogen

Rated R

The Princess Without a Voice

"The Shape of Water" Proves Guillermo del Toro's Prowess

by Alexandra Louis

On paper, "The Shape of Water" sounds like a chaotic and inexplicable fever dream: a woman (Sally Hawkins) who is unable to speak and who works nights cleaning a Cold War-era government facility falls in love with the amphibious creature (played by del Toro golden boy Doug Jones) kept there and helps him to escape.

Once director Guillermo del Toro's name comes up, however, the vision clicks into place. Describing his latest film as an "adult fairy tale for troubled times," del Toro has created a masterpiece that feels both like an amalgamation and an improvement of almost all he's done in the past fifteen years. The film is rife with del Toro's own trademarks—the rich and colorful sets are reminiscent of those seen in "Crimson Peak" and "Hellboy," the fairytale elements and opening voiceover a follow up to "Pan's Labyrinth," and the specific brand of blunt, sparse, but shocking violence is drawn from all of the above. This is del Toro's strongest film in over a decade, which is saying something for a man who has yet to fail.

At the forefront of the film is Hawkins' performance as Elisa and the beauty of the character's story. Elisa was found as an infant in the water of a riverbank. She originated in the water and through her love for the Amphibian Man, she returns to it. She needs the water in order to survive perhaps as much as he does. As for Hawkins, the voiceover in the first scene refers to Elisa as "the princess without voice," but it should be noted that she need not speak a single word in order

to convey everything that words would. Hawkins' performance is impeccable, allowing the audience to feel as though they know what's going on her head and heart without her ever having to say it out loud.

"The Shape of Water" brings those on the margins straight into the center of the story. As neither of the leads actually speak, much of the dialogue comes from Zelda (Octavia Spencer) and Giles (Richard Jenkins), a black woman and a closeted gay man. The foremost villain, Strickland (Michael Shannon), is by no mistake an aggressively straight white man with misogynistic, racist, and xenophobic tendencies at the core of his character. The film actively acts as a direct foil to the Cold War-era movies that inspired it. Had "The Shape of Water" been made in 1962, when it is set, Strickland would likely have been the hero. Del Toro has subverted what audiences are used to seeing in a beautiful way—a Cold War film in which the Russian double-agent is the character to root for and the All-American father-of-two is a deeply disturbed villain. The film is set in a time period before black

Americans could vote in this country and when homosexuality was still a DSM diagnosis, but a black woman and a gay man share the majority of the dialogue. It's a monster movie where the creature of mysterious origin gets the girl. On top of this, the Amphibian Man fully embodies "the other" that was such a striking and horrific thought in this time period and that Americans still struggle with today. Del Toro embraces this, however—it is exactly his otherness that makes him so beautiful and so dear to Elisa, and it is what makes him different that necessitates that he be saved.

Elisa can't speak, but she can sing. In a musical sequence, she sings her feelings for her amphibious lover. The lights go dark, the color fades to black and white, and suddenly she is dressed in a gown and on an old Hollywood stage, singing without speaking and dancing through it all. In this way, "The Shape of Water" mirrors its protagonist—it plays like live theater, moves like a meticulously choreographed dance, and above all, it does not speak. It sings.

Released: December 1, 2017

Directed by: Guillermo del Toro

Written by: Guillermo del Toro and Vanessa Taylor

Starring: Doug Jones, Sally Hawkins, Octavia Spencer, Michael Shannon, and Richard Jenkins

Rated R

NINTENDO IS STUCK IN THE PAST

Their Love for Nostalgia will be Their Downfall

by Aurora Mak

Within a year, Nintendo released two microconsoles which included expansive catalogs of classic Nintendo games that many people grew up playing. The Nintendo Entertainment System: NES Classic Edition was released on Nov. 11, 2016 with 30 games built into the machine for \$60, the typical price of one new video game title on any standard console. Following the success of this re-release of an old classic, Nintendo repeated their success in September 2017 by launching the Super NES Classic for \$80 with 21 games built-in.

In adjunct with the debut of these miniatures of two classic consoles, Nintendo also released a brand new, full-fledged console: the Nintendo Switch. The Switch was priced at \$300 with only 10 games for separate purchase on launch day. Of the 10 titles, only two were actually developed by Nintendo—the most hyped of which, “Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild,” was originally intended for the previous Nintendo console, the Wii U. The Wii U struggled to gain traction in the market, which led to the game being pushed back until finally being released years after it was promised. “Zelda” is a Nintendo exclusive game which is often heavily advertised as a reason to buy the company’s new console in the first place. But with the Wii U, that wasn’t the case.

Those who bought the Wii U had to wait five years for the promised game to finally arrive, and by then, they had the tough decision of either sticking to the outdated console or jumping ship and moving on to the next chapter of Nintendo—a chapter that was not originally intended. The Wii U’s failure at being the newest flagship console was what prompted the developers at Nintendo to create the Switch in the first place, thus making the console nothing more than an attempt for the legendary company to stay current and not simply be “the company who made Mario.”

What’s so egregious about Nintendo’s latest antics is that it doesn’t match their history of being an innovative company with a firm understanding of its market and how to adapt to fit the desires of their customers. Nintendo stated their philosophy has been to be innovative and to inspire further game development and creativity, but with the digression to simply remakes of old content and consoles, no innovation is being put forth, and no creativity is being derived from the blatant self-plagiarism. Its lazy copy, paste, and change-the-font-size job can’t even be called a period piece that offers a new and exciting experience with the same old feel everyone grew up to love. Instead of making a product that thrusts the buyer back to when they were nine

years old playing “Starfox” for the first time on Christmas day, Nintendo forces the buyer to pick up a dusty old toy that they don’t even play with anymore while hovering over their shoulder, praying that they actually enjoy the sad attempt at rekindling something that resembles childlike joy.

Indie game developer, StudioMDHR, have, on the other hand, succeeded in capturing a time period and offering a nostalgic experience. Their first game, “Cuphead”—a rage-inducing, run-and-gun game stylized to look like ‘30s-era animation—that definitely has its eyes set on referencing a decades-old genre of games, has hit the nail on the head on offering a nostalgic feel of how games used to be in their earlier iterations while still looking fresh, new, and not exactly like a carbon copy of the decade it’s emulating. Unlike the two brothers who comprise StudioMDHR, the massive corporation that has the resources to create beautiful and inspiring content opted for reaching into their proverbial “Disney Vault” and selling people’s raw memories back at them. While “Cuphead” is a game that took three years from its first announcement at E3 2014 to finally release, Nintendo just shrunk their old content and told the masses to eat it up as if it were new.

Nintendo, along with Xbox and PlayStation, is considered one of the major game consoles. But a key difference between Nintendo and the latter two is that Microsoft and Sony are scrambling over creating games that have the best graphics, the best story, and the sleekest hardware, while Nintendo is trying desperately to make the box that holds the game more unique and provocative rather than actually producing new and innovative content.

While the other two powerhouse gaming systems are pumping out simple, matte black boxes that can play 4K movies, link up to Netflix, and have massive storage built into them from the time of launch, Nintendo is busy blurring the line between what is a tablet, an at-home console, and a handheld gaming system that makes the bus ride to school that much more fun. Nintendo needs to quit looking through their old scrapbook and actually focus on making new content that has games galore to play. Because if there aren't any games worth playing, the only thing the customer has is another item collecting dust and taking up where the new Xbox could be.

The easier sell for the company is just repackaging their outdated innovations rather than thinking up any new ones. Nintendo has resorted to selling weird gimmicks as the reason to buy their new stuff, when it should be looking to the future and creating

games that take its legacy to the modern level. "Breath of the Wild" was pushed by the company as the reason to buy the Switch because it was exactly the type of content that should be produced by the company constantly—a classic idea that everyone knew but wasn't a direct transfer of the original "Legend of Zelda" released decades ago. Instead, it worked to elevate the franchise.

The issue is Nintendo has built itself on being able to roll with the punches and growing as the industry morphs and reaches new limits. But if they keep churning out the same off-white-and-beige boxes that got them to

where they are, they'll be left in the dust. Nostalgia is a concept of the past, and if Nintendo expects it to be their future, they are in for a rude awakening. Instead of being a good throwback to a simpler time where games were a fraction of the size they are now, it'll become an outdated company stuck in the eighties.



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